

where Thiers had lived in his student days was the first home of the Zolas at Aix. It stood at the end of a strip of road, a "no thoroughfare" called picturesquely the Impasse Sylvacanne. There was a large garden to the house, and in that garden little Emile disported himself as he listed.

His mother and grandmother spoilt him, as the saying goes. His father's death filled them with indulgence for his childish faults. He was a boy to be petted and humoured, for the greatest of misfortunes had fallen on Mm. Spending so much of his time in the open air, he was becoming quite a sturdy little fellow, sun-tanned, with soft, thoughtful eyes and a perky nose, and his incessant questions seemed to indicate the possession of an intelligent and eager mind. But, as yet, no attempt was made to educate him. His mother was already busy with her lawyers, striving to enforce her claims, and endeavouring also to obtain influential support. When Thiers came to Aix some four months after François Zola's death, the widow presented her little son to the great man in the hope of thereby arousing his sympathy. And Thiers certainly responded with fair words, though whether he went further is doubtful. At all events, lawsuits were started, and to the worry they entailed one must ascribe the comparative neglect in which young Emile

remained a
little longer.

At last, in the autumn of 1847, it was
decided to send
him to school. Some doubt as to the result of
the lawsuits
was already arising in the minds of Madame
Zola and, her
parents, and they felt that they must at least
provide for the
boy's future by giving him a sound education.
It was sug-
gested that he should be sent immediately to
the College of
Aix — now called the Lycée Mignet; but as
he did not